

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T SECTO 08051

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E.O 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS),EG, US
SUBJECT: REPORT FOR SADAT DAMASCUS CONVERSATIONS

EYES ONLY FOR CHRISTOPHER AND TARNOFF

CAIRO FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

1. THERE ARE THREE POINTS FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS IN DAMASCUS
WHICH I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD CONVEY TO SADAT AND FAHMY AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THEY WILL HAVE READ
REPORTS OF ASSAD'S PRESS CONFERENCE LAST EVENING:

A THE SYRIANS HAVE REACTED QUITE NEGATIVELY TO THE
IDEA OF A FORMAL WORKING GROUP IN NEW YORK. AT THE SAME
TIME, ASSAD HAS SAID THAT KHADDAM WOULD ATTEND THE
UNGA AND WOULD WANT TO CONTINUE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH
US. THEREFORE, WE STILL INTEND TO FOLLOW THE
COURSE THT SADAT AND I DISCUSSED WITH REGARD TO CONTACTS
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CONDUCTED BY ME IN NEW YORK, ALTHOUGH WE WILL HAVE TO
FIND A DIFFERENT WAY OF DESCRIBING THEM. YOU MIGHT
WANT TO EXPLAIN THAT THE NEGATIVE SYRIAN REACTION
RESULTS PARTLY, ACCORDING TO THE SYRIANS, FROM THE FACT
THAT THE EGYPTIANS DID NOT CONSULT THE SYRIANS BEFORE
ANNOUNCING THEIR PROPOSALS AND PARTLY, I SUSPECT,
FROM SYRIANS' SUSPICIONS THAT THIS IS A U.S.-ISRAELI-

EGYPTIAN IDEA FOR EVADING A FORMAL RECONVENING
OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THUS LEAVING THE PLO OUT OF
THE NEGOTIATIONS.

B. IN GENERAL, THE SYRIANS' REACTION TO THE FIVE PRINCIPLES
WAS MUCH THE SAME AS SADAT'S. HOWEVER, ON ALL ISSUES I
SENSED THAT THE SYRIANS ARE RESERVING THEIR POSITIONS
UNTIL THEY HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO MEET WITH THE OTHER ARAB
LEADERS FOLLOWING MY DEPARTURE FROM THE AREA.

C. ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION, ASSAD CONTINUES TO PREFER
UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION. HE SHOWED SOME INTEREST IN SADAT'S
IDEA OF AN ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION, BUT I SUSPECT THT IN HIS
MIND HE MAY HAVE BEEN THINKING OF THIS IN TERMS OF A
DELEGATION FOR ALL ARABS AND NOT JUST FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

2. FOR YOUR OWN GUIDANCE, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT I HAVE
DECIDED TO TRY TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE TERM "TRUSTEESHIP."
KHADDAM REACTED QUITE NEGATIVELY, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE
CONNOTATIONS OF COLONIALISM AND PALESTINIAN INABILITY TO
MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. WHEN I MET WITH ASSAD I USED THE
TERM "TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS" AND THE REACTION SEE
MED

MUCH MORE REASONABLE.) IN MY SIX HOURS OF TALKS HERE KHADDAM AND
ASSAD WERE THOUGHTFUL, CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS,
WILLING TO CONTINUE WORKING CLOSELY WITH US. THEY WERE FIRM IN
THEIR DESIRE TO COORDINATE WITH OTHER ARABS BUT CRITICAL
OF EGYPTIAN FAILURE TO COORDINATE WITH THEM.

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